



## **A Guide to**

How to prepare and create a job fair  
@your library



south carolina  
**STATE LIBRARY**

# Checklist for your Job Fair

## First things first

- ☐ Identify companies and/or agencies that may participate
- ☐ Get approval from manager, Library Director, Library Board
- ☐ Submit the program proposal or have an agenda of what you wish to accomplish
- ☐ Prepare clients and customers for the job fair
- ☐ Seek the support of other departments within the library
- ☐ Identify a location (Rooms)
- ☐ Make a “to do” list
  - People that will be needed to assist
  - Job roles for individuals
  - Making calls and contact (who, what, when)
  - Create a deadline
  - Create a flyer to sent out to employers to register/letter
  - Create a flyer for clients and the public
  - Taking your plans to the supervisors

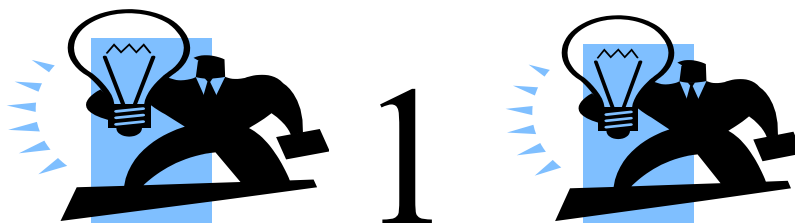
## Keep the ball rolling for your Job Fair

- ☐ Establish a date and time
- ☐ Identify conflicts
- ☐ Develop a theme
- ☐ Contact area employers
- ☐ Contact the media, update website, post signage, alert patrons
- ☐ Identify the key players
  - Make verification calls to confirmed employers and providers
  - Send letters to employers and providers to register or provide detail about the fair
  - Follow-up to employers if needed
  - Send confirmation letters or confirmation phone calls
  - Obtain company information before employers and providers arrive to copied for customers and clients
  - Consideration of Services for special populations –Hard to employ, disabled, older workers
- ☐ Provide good directions
  - Directions from north, south, east and west

- ☐ Use a scheduling system for all staff so that everyone knows where to be, and what to do
  - Make copies and distribute them widely for clients and customers about job openings for potential employers
    - Examine any last minute situations- movement in various areas, special employers, staff concerns
    - Prepare folders and handouts for employers
- ☐ Location of Check-in reception area
- ☐ Hospitality room for employers for breaks, food, snacks if applicable

## **The big day**

- ☐ Start the job fair
  - ☐ Set up the interview site if required or requested (should be done the day before)
  - ☐ Reserve the room(s) the day before and the day off the job fair
  - ☐ Timing is everything (meet every employer)
  - ☐ Brief the employers on dos and don'ts
  - ☐ Show hospitality constantly with staff
    - ☐ Bring snacks to employers for those that may not be able to leave booth if you plan to have a lengthy job fair
    - ☐ Make the rounds every 30 minutes to check on employers needs
    - ☐ Consider taking over booth area if employers needs to exit for a few minutes
    - ☐ If possible come around with water, drinks, napkins, snacks, cookies near the end of the job fair for employers
- ☐ Close-out is very important ( make sure to have evaluation forms for employers)
- ☐ Employer recognition and Thank You courtesies (prizes can be done for best booth display, creativity, etc)
- ☐ Rest, Rest, Rest and begin again for the next job fair



Job fairs have been used by schools and other institutions for many years. They connect clients and people with local company recruiters who might offer jobs. Libraries can also assist their citizens in gaining employment by hosting employment fairs.

### ***What is a job fair or career fair?***

A job fair involves gathering employers and related service agencies together with job seekers in an interview and information format. Special fairs can also be created and tailored to different populations:

- Teens: Teen job fairs, career fairs, life after high school fairs which can have variety of things
- Volunteer fairs for organizations that are seeking volunteers
- Community services fairs for social service and non profits that provide services on a variety of levels.
- Health fairs
- Re-entry fairs for ex offenders, juveniles, and the hard to employ

## ***Planning the job fair***

### ***Identify companies and/or agencies that may participate***

A key component to the job fair process is identifying potential employers in an area reasonably close to the job fair site who might want to participate. Identify large companies that have local operations if at all possible.

- In addition, local companies that do business with the community, such as local supply and parts stores, the local gas and electric companies, banks, insurance and construction companies should be encouraged to participate.
- Use the Internet, the local chamber of commerce, the yellow pages, Better Business Bureau publications to help identify appropriate companies.
- An institution's community relations board, guest speaker lists for various employment topics, any personal contacts, and any other resources available locally, can also help.

### ***Prepare patrons and customers for the job fair***

The selection of participants is important, and preparing them for interviews with company recruiters is critical. Having a pre session or prep session before the job fair is a great way to assist clients and customers to be prepared or plan for any unforeseen problems.

- This could include preparation of a resume, and completing job applications in a legible, accurate, and complete fashion. Spend some time on refresher training in these two important areas and cover such additional subjects as:
  - Good grooming and appearance
  - The importance of a firm handshake

- Speaking in a clear, concise, and friendly manner (a few smiles are in order)
- Responding to the interviewers' questions in an open and sincere fashion
- Avoid finger and foot "tapping," and other sign of nervousness
- Encourage the participants to practice these interview skills with each other in advance of the job fairs

Each participant should have a folder that includes a resume, copies of work assignment or education progress reports, an education transcript, education certificates, proof of citizenship or a "green card," and other pertinent information.

### **Special Note\***

If you have citizens who are ex-offenders they should be encouraged to gather as much information as possible such as IDs, social security cards and driver's licenses which can be added to these folders.

(If ID such as driver's licenses is an issue, have the ex-offender consider getting a state ID)

- Finally, it is important before a job fair for organizers to stress how important it is that the company and community representatives leave with a positive impression of the participants, and not with the stereotypical picture of ex-offenders and any hard to employ clients they might have had before their participation in the job fair.

### ***Seek the support of other departments***

Input regarding location of the job fair, custodial assistance, extra staff, and other institution support can be crucial to job fair success. A plan which involves the entire facility is also more likely to be more productive. Have a plan on individuals from various departments who may wish to participate or can provide assistance.

### ***Identify a location (rooms)***

Have rooms that offer space and good traffic flow. But smaller rooms can also be used for interviewing, overflow, and also for presentations from employers at the job fair.

### ***Make a "to do" list***

Prepare a list of tasks that must be accomplished before the actual job fair date. A time line should be provided to ensure that all tasks are completed, that there are no conflicts, and that involved schedules are clear and sequential.



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## ***Keep the projects rolling!***

### ***Establish a date and time***

Schedule plenty of time to get everything done. A 90-day lead time provides time for necessary approvals, and also allows for the invitations to employers, community organizations, faith-based groups and others.

### ***Identify conflicts***

Check other scheduled or potential activities that are occurring at the library or in the vicinity, or around town such as staff meetings, special events, pre- reserved rooms and schedule around them. Think about more than one date to allow flexibility in the event conflicts arise. *If all else fails consider a Saturday.*

### ***Get mgmt in the loop- Supervisor, Branch Manager, and Library Director***

Management will want information about the “who, what, where, and why” of the job fair. Management will be concerned about security and will want to know what resources will be needed.

### ***Develop a theme***

One of the best methods of getting the job fair off of the ground is to have a theme such as:

**“Expand Your Mind, Expand Your Opportunities,” “Preparing for the Future,”**  
**“From Prison to Payroll,” and “Careers – 201 .” “The State Library Industry Job fair”**

This sets a positive tone for participants and stimulates creativity in developing flyers and banners to advertise the event.

- Develop a program proposal which describes the job fair by addressing date, location, security, participation, and expected outcomes. Decide if employers will need to interview clients, have presentations, or require special considerations.

### ***Contact area employers - identifying the key players***

Use all available company names and addresses near the library. Use your library resources and databases to identify addresses of large national companies that operate in the local area. Locate the name, title, address, phone, email and fax number of each company’s human resources director or personnel chief.

### ***Make verification calls***

People change jobs and telephone numbers frequently. Verify all information before mailing out invitations.

### ***Send letters to employers***

Invitations should be sent to an adequate number of employers explaining what kind of job fair is scheduled, and what is expected of them. This will be based on how many you wish to attend your job fair (small job fair 1-5, moderate 5-10, large 10+ employers)

**Employers, who know about other companies that are participating, might be more willing to consider becoming involved.** You may want to reference that list and enclose Xerox copies in your company letters.

### ***Follow-up***

It is critically important to make follow-up calls to employers to confirm their participation. It may take several calls to get a return call, and you may want to make a personal visit to the company representative if you sense significant reluctance to participate. If your local Chamber of Commerce has agreed to participate in the job fair, one of its representatives may be willing to help encourage company recruiters to participate also.

### ***Send confirmation letters***

Confirm company commitments by sending them a follow-up letter with the date, time, and location of the job fair. Remind them of:

- Any security concerns such as what not to bring inside,
- The requirement to have a picture ID,
- The importance of arriving early to allow for admission, parking, or checking in,
- Also, ask them to send a supply of their company's job application forms to be filled in.

### ***Obtain company information***

Ask companies that agree to participate to provide a brochure (or other overview) of their organization, products, market locations, and a supply of their job application forms. The information could then be provided to library patrons in a pre job fair session that you may want to consider hosting so they can prepare for company recruiters.

### ***Services for Special Populations***

You may want to review the characteristics of your local community population to determine if you need to address the special needs of different groups. For example, considerations for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), ex offenders, retired citizens, seniors, teens, and persons with disabilities. Having representatives from Vocational Rehab or ESOL representatives can be a great addition to the job fair.

### ***Provide good directions***

Provide directions by a separate letter or fax about a week before the scheduled job fair. It serves as another reminder of participating groups' agreement to attend. It should also include a request that they provide notification of any cancellation.

Finally, you may want to display appropriate signs at or near the entrance to the library to direct community participants to the check-in location.

### ***Directions from north, south, east and west***

Provide clear, concise, and detailed directions to the event from at least three different directions, including important landmarks.

### ***Schedule of staff and the event***

Tight scheduling is important for the event to run smoothly and to remain organized. Allocations of space for each participating agency or company, needs to be determined and assigned.

### ***Use a scheduling system***

#### ***Questions to consider***

- **Who will be placed where and for how long during the job fair?**
- **Which individuals can switch roles or places as the job fair moves along?**
- **Who will greet the employer's, deal with registration, keep traffic flow, security, etc.**

### ***Make copies and distribute them widely***

If needed have copies of each employer's hiring positions.

### ***Fax reminders to employers***

A week before the event, each employer should be faxed a reminder that repeats the location, date, and time of the job fair. Provide a telephone contact number and again ask for confirmation.

### ***Prepare folders and handouts for employers***

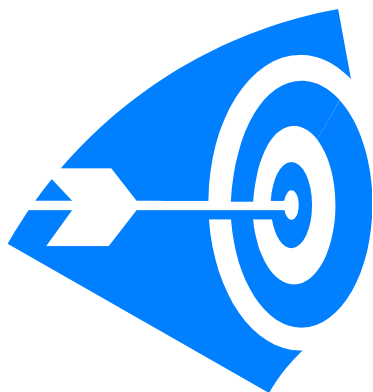
Provide individualized folders or welcome bags for employers which include the agenda with associated times, snacks (for any long events), location of restrooms, evaluation forms, and information about your library. Include information about other employers who are participating in the job fair. Include a note that completed job fair evaluation forms should be returned to the job fair coordinator at the end of the event. Important things to have completed the day before the job fair:

- Place the name of the company and recruiter prominently on the cover of the folder. Also make tent cards for the tables of each employer. Place items on each table.
- Have a design layout of where you want each employer in the room.
- If needed, consider what food items (if having snacks, drinks, ice, etc) can be purchased before the event, and what must be purchased the day of, during, or near a special time.
- **Have a list of the company recruiters: name of recruiter, name of company and company address, this can double as a sign in sheet and be kept for your records for thank you correspondence.**

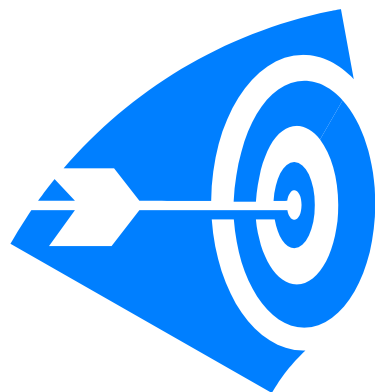
### ***The Check-In Reception Area***

You may want to consider decorating the check-in area in some special appropriate way. Others displayed large welcome signs over the entrance to the job fair location.





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## ***It's a Bull's-eye @ the library for the Job Fair***

The day of the job fair is not the time to find out what has been forgotten. Proper planning will eliminate last minute questions and stress! Set up the job fair room as early as possible, the day before is preferable. This will allow everyone time to make any adjustments necessary.

### ***Start the job fair***

#### ***Timing is everything***

A large job fair could run from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., 10:00am until 2:00pm, 1:00pm to 5:00pm or for special employers or clients consider an evening job fair, or 4:00pm to 7:30pm. This allows time for orientations, closeouts and evaluations. But job fairs can be as small as 1 hour based on time, the type of employer, and rooms that could be needed at your library.

### ***Set up the site***

- Tables need to be identified with signs that show what company the recruiter represents.
- Arrange a separate waiting room or area for client's customer to spend time or for presentations for employers. The noise level in the area may be a problem.
- Also try to leave enough space between employer tables to provide some privacy for the clients and employers.
- Try to have an area for customer and clients to use for filling out applications, waiting to speak to employers, or preparation of materials. Examine your space and then decide the best plan of action. Always get a second opinion.
- Have survey and comment cards for participants to fill out before they depart. A designated table or area that is easily accessible will help facilitate getting responses.

### ***Brief the employers on dos and don'ts***

Before the job fair begins, ensure that employers understand location of bathrooms, time frame of the job fair, importance of not breaking down booth early, items to not bring into the library, having ID, and any other important piece of advice.

### ***Close-out is very important***

The last 30 minutes of the job fair recruiters, employers, etc should be reminded to fill out the job fair evaluation forms and to hand them to the job fair coordinator. If at all possible, the final closeout could have staff facilitators, and libraries executive staff thanks the employers all together and present a gift item to the best booth or most creative employer.

### ***Employer recognition and Thank You***

Recognition builds good will and can be a positive marketing tool for future job fairs. Prepare “thank you letters or even thank you certificates” and have your library director sign them along with any appropriate mementos, to employer participants during the closeout. All items should be sent out within the first week following the job fair.

### ***Conclusion***

If all goes according to plan, the job fair experience will be rewarding for all involved. The evaluations by participants and company representatives will help to identify any glitches that need to be corrected. The feedback survey forms will help you identify any success stories. The first job fair will be the most challenging.

***Sample Invitation Letter***

Jason Broughton  
South Carolina State Library  
Job Fair—Date \_\_\_\_\_

Fake Company  
330 Second Street  
Sunnyside, TX  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Ms. Friedman:

This letter would like to invite you and your organization, Waggle Concepts, as a public service, to our “Winter Wonderland Employment Fair” from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. on date \_\_\_\_\_

We are seeking employers that are currently looking to fill seasonal positions with individuals of relevant work experience, to participate in the State Library job fair called the “Winter Wonderland Employment Fair”, to be held at the South Carolina State Library, 1930 Manahan Road, North Charleston SC site. Our goal is to provide a job fair, designed to help our clients and the public.

On behalf of the South Carolina State Library, we thank you for considering this request. We will follow-up with a telephone call next week to determine whether you wish to participate in this event. Once participation is confirmed, a packet containing further information about the event will be sent to you.

In the interim, if you have any questions or need further clarification, please to not hesitate to contact me at 843-574-1855

Sincerely,  
Jason Broughton  
Job Fair Coordinator, Employability Specialist

### ***Sample Confirmation phone call script***

Hello,

Thank you for agreeing to attend the “Winter Wonderland Employment Fair”, at the State Library from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00pm on \_\_\_\_\_.

Someone from our staff will greet you and assist with movement of materials, or set up. On arrival at 9:00 a.m., there will be a continental breakfast area for your enjoyment.

Do you have directions to our facility?

If not I can email or send you directions.

If possible could you email or fax me what positions you are hiring for?

Or any documents that our clients could review such as a brochure that describes your company’s operations or specific items about your website?

We look forward to meeting you.

If you have any questions or need for further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Jason Broughton at 843-574-1855

***Sample Thank You Letter***

Jason Broughton  
South Carolina State Library  
Employability Specialist  
Job Fair–Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Waggle Concepts  
330 Second Street  
Sunnyside, TX  
Ft. Worth, TX 76102

Date

Dear Ms. Friedman:

This is to express our sincere appreciation for your participation in the recent job fair held at the South Carolina State Library; you have performed an important public service.

We are grateful for your time and we hope that you will consider joining us for future job fairs.

Please share your experience with colleagues and invite them to contact Jason Broughton, Job Fair Coordinator & Employment Specialist, if they are interested in participating in future job fairs.

I can be reached at 843-514-1855

Sincerely,